

TRAINING NOTES



Modern Dragoons Bradley Mechanized Infantry

CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER E. LOCKHART

The Army's dragoons of the 19th century fought dismounted against Seminole Indians in the Florida swamps and some years later, deployed west of the Mississippi River to fight mounted against the Plains Indians. So, too, are our modern dragoons—Bradley mechanized infantrymen—required to maintain their skills in both mounted and dismounted operations.

The Army's two most recent combat deployments demonstrated the importance of versatility in mechanized infantry units. The conflict in Southwest Asia during Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM highlighted the mounted role of mechanized infantrymen. Only a year earlier, however, mechanized infantry units (although not Bradley-equipped) participated in Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama and encountered circumstances dramatically different from those we found in Southwest Asia: For example, the terrain was urban and jungle rather than desert and the enemy was predominantly a light infantry force rather than an armor or mechanized infantry force. Such extreme differences demonstrate that mechanized infantrymen must be proficient in both mounted and dismounted skills if they are to meet a

variety of threats in the post-Cold War era.

The introduction of the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle has technologically revolutionized mechanized infantry, and all U.S. Army mechanized infantry units will soon be equipped with Bradleys. While the Bradley gives soldiers more offensive options than the M113 armored personnel carrier (APC),

it also raises two major issues that leaders of Bradley units must resolve: What is the role of Bradley-equipped mechanized infantry in the combined arms team? and How does a commander prevent the training of the mounted element from overshadowing the training of the dismounted element?

There are many different opinions on the proper role of mechanized infantry



Bradley crew in the 3d Armored Division recons cease-fire line, Operation DESERT STORM, 1991.

units equipped with Bradleys. Some contend that the Bradley is essentially an infantry personnel carrier with some added firepower. Others believe it has so revolutionized the tactical employment of mechanized infantry units that these units should be managed by Armor Branch and renamed *armored infantry*. The proper perspective lies between these two extremes.

Bradley mechanized infantrymen are neither *mounted infantrymen* nor *mini-tankers*. They are today's dragoons, who must be equally effective in both their mounted and dismounted roles. These roles will include supporting armor-heavy forces. Although supporting tanks is a hard pill for some infantrymen to swallow, this is a function they must recognize if they are to arrange essential tasks and missions in the right priority, and take advantage of the tank's mobility and firepower.

Bradley crewmen and Abrams tank crewmen go through similar training events: Unit Conduct of Fire Trainers (U-COFTs), Simulations Network (SIMNET), the JANUS computer war game simulation, the Bradley (or tank) Crew Proficiency Course, Table VIII and Table XII gunnery. But a Bradley is not a tank, nor is it designed primarily to kill tanks.

Although the TOW is the Bradley's most powerful weapon, it is not the vehicle's main weapon system. The TOW provides stand-off fire beyond 3,500 meters and enables the Bradley to engage tanks at ranges equal to or greater than those of the tank's main gun, but its main gun is the 25mm Bushmaster cannon.

Equally important, the Bushmaster should not be thought of as just an APC-killer. It also supplements the fire of the tanks' main guns by destroying lightly armored combat vehicles with its sabot rounds. Often overlooked, however, is the Bushmaster's equally critical task of destroying or suppressing armor-killer teams with 25mm high-explosive rounds. The Bushmaster can accomplish this task more efficiently and at greater range than the vehicle's coaxial machinegun.

In fact, destroying armor-killer teams

has been the 25mm cannon's primary role, from its conception. Yet training on ranges and in simulators such as the U-COFT focuses on the cannon's role in killing BMPs.

The Bradley's task of destroying lightly armored combat vehicles should not be secondary to its role of destroying or suppressing armor-killer teams. The two tasks should receive equal emphasis. Thus, trainers of mounted crews must expand the role of the 25mm cannon.

Dismounted soldiers, on the other hand, must narrow their focus to tasks that are truly mission essential, and mechanized infantry leaders must arrange the dismounted tasks to be trained in a logical order of priority. The company mission essential task list (METL) determines the training plan, of course, but leaders can prioritize the types of dismounted tasks and missions that commanders should concentrate on.

Dismounted squads must be trained to proficiency in such tasks as reducing an obstacle that armor-heavy forces cannot bypass, clearing a building in a built-up area that armor-heavy forces have already bypassed, and clearing a woodline that may conceal enemy infantrymen armed with antitank guided missiles (ATGMs). Dismounted squads should also master tasks that facilitate their deployment as armor-killer teams and defending or assaulting along dismounted avenues of approach.

On the other hand, leaders should not emphasize missions that are traditionally associated with light infantry until the dismount squads have demonstrated their proficiency in missions associated with the movement and defense of heavy forces. In other words, the training priority should not be on executing long-range patrolling, search and attack, or raids and ambushes. This point is especially important because so many distractors can divert training time from dismounted training.

When some people think of cross-training in a mechanized infantry unit, they think of dismount soldiers learning turret or driving skills—not of gunners or Bradley commanders practicing individual movement techniques. No com-

mander would think of going to a gunnery exercise without a number of alternate crews who are trained, at least to minimum standards, in the U-COFT. And these alternate crews must come, of course, from the dismount element.

The soldiers of the dismount element must also be trained in the procedures for loading the 25mm ammunition and TOW rounds, which further takes away from their training on dismounted tasks. When a dismount element is deployed on the ground, one member must be left in the vehicle to load ammunition. Ironically, the Bradley's increased firepower results in reduced manpower for the dismounted squad.

Gunnery also takes away from the dismount element's training: The soldiers in the dismount element traditionally provide range support so the mounted crews can concentrate on gunnery. Dismounted soldiers also guard, break down, and issue ammunition to the mounted crews; serve as safety officers in the misfire and clearing pit; and man various details such as cleaning billets, guard force, and KP.

In addition to taking away from their training time, the use of dismounts in this manner leads to conflict between the mounted and dismounted elements, and the dismounts are often looked upon as "second class citizens."

The presentation of awards tends to amplify this conflict. Medals are awarded to the mounted crews because their accomplishments are more visible to the chain of command during high-profile events such as shooting distinguished on Tables VIII/XII, or chalking up a dozen enemy vehicle "kills" at one of the combat training centers. The tendency of Bradley units to focus on gunnery and mounted maneuver also highlights the dismount element's subordinate image.

There are several steps mechanized infantry commanders can take to train their mounted and dismounted elements, and also counter the "them-versus-us" mentality. First, they should devise a separate training plan for each element. Gunnery rotations should not focus strictly on the Bradley; dismounted squad and platoon live-fires should be

incorporated, using the mounted crews for detail support. After both mounted and dismounted squads have attained proficiency in the basic skills, collective training events such as Bradley Table XII should be used to train the two elements together.

Key leaders (from platoon sergeants through battalion commanders) must spend equal time planning and observing dismounted and mounted training events. This not only allows them to provide and receive feedback on training but also emphasizes the two elements equally.

After the completion of such major training events as gunnery or rotations at the combat training centers, awards should be distributed equally to the

mounted and dismounted elements. This practice would further reinforce cohesion and the idea that, to be successful, each element should complement the other.

A plan should be implemented to rotate dismounted and mounted crews—not only to achieve cross-training but also to encourage the impression that personnel moves from the dismounted element to the mounted element are lateral, not upward.

Moving proficient soldiers out of high-visibility positions into less visible positions (especially proficient Bradley gunners) is often a difficult decision. But these measures will help develop a training program that produces a complementary, rather than competitive,

relationship. Only when the elements receive equal emphasis will Bradley mechanized infantry units be able to achieve the versatility required of modern dragoons.

Captain Christopher E. Lockhart commanded a Bradley company team in the 5th Battalion, 18th Infantry during Operation DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM and was an assistant G-3 training officer at V Corps Headquarters in Germany. He is now a student in the Eisenhower Program of Graduate Studies in Leader Development at the United States Military Academy, where he will then be assigned as a company tactical officer.

Moving Under Fire

CAPTAIN MICHAEL C. CLOY
COLONEL JOHN W. MAY, JR.

Soldiers who train at the National Training Center (NTC) often seem to be deficient in the techniques of moving under direct fire—better known as individual movement techniques (IMTs). This trend is especially evident in the infantrymen who dismount from Bradley fighting vehicles (BFVs).

One reason for this deficiency, we believe, is that the techniques of moving under direct fire are rarely included in unit training exercises. The soldiers do not use the terrain to their advantage, do not coordinate individual movements, and do not maintain the momentum. As a result, units often lose the close-in battle. Once they are within small arms range of the opposing force (OPFOR), units of platoon, company, and battalion size become decisively engaged by OPFOR squads and platoons. The results are always the

same—an objective is not taken; a mission is not accomplished; and a battlefield is littered with casualties.

Army doctrine and history adequately address individual movement techniques, and infantry soldiers are taught the basics during their initial entry training. Infantry leaders learn the value of IMT through the various service schools. Every infantry-series manual except one teaches and reinforces this awareness: IMT is not included in the Skill Level 1 tasks in the infantry soldier's manual. The closest individual task to IMT is "Move as a Member of a Fire Team." This manual, therefore, does not help infantrymen reinforce IMT training.

On the basis of our experience during several rotations at the NTC, we believe that unit training should be based on a detailed assessment of each soldier's

IMT skills, and that individual marksmanship should be linked to movement techniques before the soldiers participate in collective task training.

Although many soldiers know at least something about how to conduct IMT, their squad leaders and platoon sergeants do not always insist that they do it right. Moving under direct fire is a skill that leaders often assume their soldiers have already mastered.

To draw a parallel, IMT is the equivalent of blocking and tackling in football. Every year, football coaches across the nation proclaim that they are "going back to the basics." They usually base this decision on their teams' poor performance—or an assessment of every player's performance. In most cases, each player receives a grade indicating how he has done. Fall and spring practices begin with the basics of